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J. J. Little to John Little (13 July 1861)

Jefferson J. Little

John Little

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Fort McRee Florida

John Little

July 13th 1861

I care you much esteemed
letter came to hand a few days since
I was pleased to hear that you was all
well. I must ask to be pardoned for
not answering sooner but I have been so
busy that I have had no time to write.
This leaves me well but not enjoying
so fine a share of health as when I written
before. I have been having chills for several days
The weather is so warm that we cant work in the
day except such as we can do in the shade so when
we build sand Batteries or dig ditches we have
to work during the night and I suppose
this is what bring on the chills. For our Quarters
are in 20 feet of the sea shore, and the nights
are very cool and powerful dery fully here
Geography will explain these things if
you will look them up, (Look for Trade Winds)

Well John I will try to give you an idea of
what we are doing of a night when
we get our supper we all get our spades.

I have Axes. Hand Saws Wheel Saws &
a few Hoes. and from 30 to 40 hundred
march out like good fellows in crowds
some go one way and some another to
build sand Batteries. Roll & mount
Cannons &c. to keep the Yankees back--

a sand Battery is an immense pile of sand.
bags one piled on another untill we get
a pile high enough to hide completely behind
the ditches (or more properly speaking entrench-
ments) are wide deep canals thrown
up they lead from one Battery to another
or from a battery to a Magazine or Fort
the Cannons are mounted at these Batteries &
Forts, on carriages which is worked by wheels
in giving them the direction we wish to shoot
I will inclose a piece showing the different
sizes & weights of cannons and ^{their} balls.

So this is generally the kind of work we do

night. Well now for the day. The drum calls up to
roll-call at 4 o'clock in the morning. We then
go out and drill one hour and a half. Then come
in and get Breakfast. Then we drill in heavy
Artillery one hour. We then generally arrange
all the implements and work in the ordnance
department this brings on dinner we then
have two hours to cook and eat our dinners
then we must go and drill again and arrange
our arms, Ammunition and so for a fight
the following night if any thing should
happen, and then prepare for supper so you
can see that we don't have many idle hours
nor even moments. Wasn't it tight but we
must stand up to the rack. Well John if
you was out here to see all these Boys cooking
Washing. Eating Dancing &c you would
be amused you could see whole Acres
of Land covered over with little bunches
of Men in Messes 7 or 8 in Mess down
round a little cooking just as the
Wagoners do while on the Road

You can find all Kinds and Qualities of Men
here yes even Boys there are some Boys here that
are not over 11 years old besides the duty I have
told you of we do Guard duty we are bound to be
going on all the time they are placed out to
Guard us while we work sleep and eat if they
did not use a great amount of vigilance
the Yank Keep would get us sure for we can see
one any time we look for them but mind
there is a Bay or channel of water one mile
wide between us when ever they undertake
to come over and drive us off we intend wake
them up. Well this is about all I have to write
at present tell Alld Crastus Estus & sister I
say they must be smart study your Books
learn to Read & Write. I am going to write to them
to be for long. I am also gathering several
sea shells and am going to send them to them
some time when I get a chance and I want them
to be mighty smart.

While writing this I received a letter from
Pa & Mother of the 10th inst I am glad to
hear that you are all well and have a fine prospect
for crops I hope you will have plenty of Rain
soon. I will write soon again so I must close
now you must write often give in all the news you
can think of it is good improvement. Your first letter
beat any of Marions for he wont write anything but
run after the Girls so Good By
J. J. Limer